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### Committee:

Senate Natural Resources, Environment and Great Lakes

### In opposition to:

SB 288

### Date:

April 11, 2013

Dear Chairman Casperson and Members of the Natural Resources, Environment and Great Lakes Committee:

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the nation's largest and most effective non-profit animal protection organization, opposes SB 288 and urges a "no" vote from the Committee.

This bill would undermine voters and limit their ability to weigh in on important wildlife protection measures. This proposal would allow the National Resources Commission, a seven-member, appointed panel, to list animals as game species. Just two weeks ago a coalition of conservationists, Native American tribes, scientists and animal welfare interests turned in more than 250,000 signatures from Michigan voters to place Public Act 520, listing wolves as a game species, to a referendum vote.

SB 288 would subvert this process and remove the ability of voters to weigh in on the future of wolf protection. Instead of following the wishes of voters and a democratic process representing diverse constituencies, choosing which species are appropriate to hunt would be left up to an unelected body made up of individuals often possessing no science-based background. You trust voters to vote you into office, and you should also trust voters to responsibly decide issues of great importance to them.

This bill would affect more species than just wolves. In 2006, voters overwhelmingly rejected a law to allow sport hunting of mourning doves. This was one of the most popular ballot measures in Michigan history, with voters rejecting the law in all 83 counties, from the top of the Upper Peninsula to Detroit. Voters cast more votes against shooting doves than they did for any candidate that election. If S.B. 288 passes, this decisive outcome would no doubt be reversed in the time it takes seven people to vote.

Under this proposal, the Commission could also list rare wildlife, such as sandhill cranes, as game species without even consulting the legislature. Quite simply, SB 288 has far-reaching implications for wildlife protection and the democratic process that go beyond each legislator's opinion on wolf protection. There is a year and half for voters to become educated on wolf protection—hearing from all sides—before casting their ballots. I urge you to let voters to maintain their voice on wildlife conservation by rejecting SB 288.

Jill Fritz

Michigan State Director

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